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ABSTRACT

A study was conducted at Morton College (Illinois) to develop a profile of students who applied to the college, but did not register for classes. A sample of 445 potential students who participated in the college's placement testing program for the fall 1984 semester completed the First-Time Student Questionnaire, which asked for information regarding personal characteristics, educational objectives and attitudes, high school academic performance, employment plans, and financial needs. Ten items were found to discriminate between the 383 applicants who registered for classes and the 62 applicants who did not. The factors associated with non-registration were: (1) being 30 years of age or older; (2) living with a roommate, alone, or with a relative other than a spouse or parent; (3) having one or more dependent children; (4) having one or more dependent children under the age of six; (5) planning to attend college part-time; (7) answering anything other than "always" to the question, "In high school did you turn in your assigned work on time?"; (8) answering "no" or "don't know" to the question, "Do you expect to be enrolled at Morton College next semester?"; (9) planning to obtain a repayable loan to finance education; and (10) intending to work over 20 hours per week while in college. Based on study findings, it was recommended that Morton College initiate an adult re-entry program. The First-Time Student Questionnaire is appended. (AYC)

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FIRST-TIME STUDENT QUESTIONNAIRE:
AN ATTEMPT TO IDENTIFY THOSE APPLICANTS MOST LIKELY NOT TO REGISTER

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JC 840 539

First-Time Student Questionnaire: An Attempt to Identify Those Applicants Most Likely Not to Register

As the number of high school graduates declines and new student enrollments decrease, colleges can be expected to initiate or strengthen programs designed to reduce attrition. An important aspect of these programs should be the establishment of a method to identify potential dropouts early in the application/registration process.

Based on the research of Astin (1975) and Kester (1980), the Office of Institutional Research and Planning has begun to devise such a method by surveying all applicants who complete the Counseling Center's Placement Testing Program.

Method

The sample consisted of 445 potential students who participated in the Placement Testing Program and planned to begin their studies during the 1984 Fall Semester. Each participant completed the First-Time Student Questionnaire, an instrument specifically designed for use in the present study (see Attachment). Three hundred and eighty-three (86%) of these individuals registered for classes and 62 (14%) did not.

Chi square analyses were performed to determine whether any of the items on the questionnaire distinguished between those persons who registered for classes and those who did not.

Results

Ten items were found to discriminate between registrants and non-registrants. The factors associated with non-registration were: being 30 years of age or older (chi square = 11.457, df = 3, p = .009), living with a roommate, or alone, or with a relative other than a spouse or parent (chi square = 15.452, df = 4, p = .004), having one or more dependent children (chi square = 10.228, df = 1, p = .001), having one or more dependent children under the age of six (chi square = 13.883, df = 1, $p < .001$), planning to attend college as a part-time student (chi square = 5.123, df = 1, p = .0225), planning to take a majority of one's coursework outside of the transfer studies area (chi square = 13.414, df = 1, $p < .001$), answering anything other than "always" to the question--In high school, did you turn in your assigned work on time (chi square = 5.211, df = 1, p = .0214), answering "no" or "don't know" to the question--Do you expect to be enrolled at Morton College next semester (chi square = 12.102, df = 2, p = .002), answering "yes" to the question--Do you plan to finance at least part of your education with a repayable loan (chi square = 6.890, df = 2, p = .0314), and intending to work over 20 hours per week while in college (chi square = 6.653, df = 1, p = .009).

Discussion

The results of this study suggest that certain factors (e.g., being 30 or older, having dependent children, and working over 20 hours a week) are associated with the

tendency for some individuals not to register for classes after having completed the Counseling Center's Placement Testing Program. Together, these factors may be thought of as a "non-registrant" character profile.

Given this information, it may be prudent for the college to take special actions in behalf of persons matching this profile. Since most of these individuals are adults, the college may wish to explore the feasibility of instituting an Adult Re-entry Program similar to those available at other community colleges. Such a program should include, at a minimum, the identification of strategies to successfully combine educational, family, and job responsibilities, a presentation by the Financial Aid Office regarding how to apply for grants and scholarships, and a discussion about the problems that adult students may encounter in college. By establishing an Adult Re-Entry Program, the college will demonstrate its commitment to serving older students and may realize a significant decrease in its attrition rate.

FIRST-TIME STUDENT QUESTIONNAIRE

Purpose

In order to better understand the characteristics of those who attend Morton College, we are collecting information from first-time students. This information will be used in various research projects at the college and will be treated CONFIDENTIALLY. Your responses to this questionnaire will in no way affect your admission to or standing at Morton College.

This questionnaire will take only a few minutes to complete. Your responses will be extremely helpful to us as we try to improve our programs and services.

Thank you for your assistance.

==========

Social Security Number _____-____-_____

In answering the following questions, please place a check mark (✓) in front of the appropriate response.

1. Sex:

   a. _____Male b. _____Female

2. Age:

   a. _____15-19 f. _____45-54

   b. _____20-24 g. _____55-59

   c. _____25-29 h. _____60-64

   d. _____30-34 i. _____65-74

   e. _____35-44 j. _____75 and over

3. Marital status:

   a. _____Not married b. _____Married

4. Ethnic Background:

   a. _____Asian/Pacific Islander d. _____Hispanic

   b. _____American Indian/Alaskan e. _____White Non-Hispanic

   c. _____Black Non-Hispanic f. _____Non-Resident Alien

   g. _____Other (please specify)

   _____

5. What language is most often spoken in your home?

a. _____English
b. _____Spanish
c. _____Czech
d. _____Polish
e. _____Italian
f. _____Greek
g. _____Lithuanian
h. _____Other (please specify)

_____

6. Living arrangements:

a. _____With parent(s) or guardian
b. _____With spouse
c. _____With other relative(s)
d. _____With roommate
e. _____Alone

7. How many dependent children do you have?

a. _____No dependent children
b. _____1
c. _____2
d. _____3 or more

8. How many of your dependent children are under the age of 6?

a. _____No dependent children
b. _____None
c. _____1
d. _____2
e. _____3 or more

9. Handicapped status:

a. _____Not handicapped
b. _____Wheelchair
c. _____Crutches or cane
d. _____Blind/partially sighted
e. _____Deaf/hard of hearing
f. _____Other (please specify)

_____

10. Have either of your parents attended college?

a. _____Yes b. _____No c. _____Don't know

11. Have any of your brothers or sisters attended college?

a. _____Yes
b. _____No
c. _____Don't know
d. _____Don't have any brothers or sisters

12. Do you plan to be a full-time or part-time student?

a. _____Full-time
b. _____Part-time

13. In what area will most of your college coursework be?

a. _____Transfer
b. _____Career
c. _____Continuing Education/ Community Service

14. What is the highest degree you expect to earn?

a. _____Don't expect to earn a degree
b. _____Certificate
c. _____Associate's
d. _____Bachelor's
e. _____Master's
f. _____Ph.D., Ed.D., or Professional Degree

15. What was your grade average in high school?

a. _____A+ or A
b. _____A-
c. _____B+
d. _____B
e. _____B-
f. _____C+
g. _____C
h. _____C-
i. _____D+
j. _____D or below

16. What was your class rank in high school?

a. _____Top quarter
b. _____Second quarter
c. _____Third quarter
d. _____Lowest quarter

17. In high school, did you turn in your assigned work on time?

a. _____Always
b. _____Usually
c. _____Sometimes
d. _____Rarely
e. _____Never

18. In high school, did you have trouble concentrating on your assignments?

a. _____Always
b. _____Usually
c. _____Sometimes
d. _____Rarely
e. _____Never

19. In high school, did you participate in extracurricular activities?

a. _____Yes b._____No

20. To what extent did you like or dislike your high school English courses?

a. _____Liked them very much
b. _____Liked them moderately
c. _____No strong feelings about them
d. _____Disliked them moderately
e. _____Disliked them very much

21. To what extent did you like or dislike your high school mathematics courses?

a. _____Liked them very much
b. _____Liked them moderately
c. _____No strong feelings about them
d. _____Disliked them moderately
e. _____Disliked them very much

22. Do you think you will need special tutoring or remedial work in certain subjects to be successful in college?

a. _____Yes b. _____No c. _____Don't know

23. What grade average do you expect to earn in college?

a. _____A+ or A
b. _____A-
c. _____B+
d. _____B
e. _____B-
f. _____C+
g. _____C
h. _____C- or below

24. How many hours per week do you expect to study outside of class while you are in college?

a. _____1 - 3
b. _____4 - 6
c. _____7 - 9
d. _____10 - 12
e. _____13 - 15
f. _____16 or more

25. Is Morton College your:

a. _____First Choice?
b. _____Second Choice?
c. _____Third Choice?
d. _____Less than Third Choice?

26. How definite are your career goals?

a. _____Very definite
b. _____Fairly definite
c. _____Fairly indefinite
d. _____Very indefinite

27. Have you spoken with a Counselor or Advisor from Morton College?

a. _____Yes
b. _____No

28. What are the chances that you will drop out of college at least temporarily at some point in time?

a. _____No chance
b. _____Very little chance
c. _____Some chance
d. _____Very good chance

29. Do you expect to be enrolled at Morton College next semester?

a. _____Yes
b. _____No
c. _____Don't know

30. What are the chances that you will be elected to an academic honor society in college?

a. _____No chance
b. _____Very little chance
c. _____Some chance
d. _____Very good chance

31. Do you plan to finance at least part of your education with a scholarship, grant, or other monetary gift?

a. _____Yes
b. _____No
c. _____Don't know

32. Do you plan to finance at least part of your education with a repayable loan?

a. _____Yes
b. _____No
c. _____Don't know

33. How many hours per week do you plan to work while you are in college?

a. _____Don't plan to work
b. _____1 - 10
c. _____11 - 20
d. _____21 - 30
e. _____31 - 40
f. _____Over 40

References

Astin, Alexander W. (1975). Preventing students from dropping out. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers.

Kester, Donald L. (1980). The diagnostic questionnaire was fast and rough, but it was also good enough. ERIC, ED 217 926.

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